
City of Tukwila Employee Survey and In House Campaign

2009

Initial Program:

The City of Tukwila targeted internal employee and staff recycling to evaluate and boost. Prior to 2009, the recycling system details included:

- All employees had a cardboard box at their desk, provided by Seadrunar, for recycling paper.
- Some employees needed to empty their own desk container into central blue barrels for collection. Other employees had materials picked up by custodial staff when containers were full.
- Bottles and cans could be recycled in central lunch or break rooms- only.
- Glass bottles were not recyclable.
- Seadrunar and Allied waste serviced buildings. Recycling rules are different for each company.

Initial April Survey findings:

The goal of this program was to increase recycling and allow more materials to be recycled. To determine baseline data, City staff and the contractor administered a survey to employees prior to starting the program. Eighty five employees responded to the initial survey (Appendix A). Lessons learned from the survey included:

- Inconsistency with collection: not sure if they are to collect their own or if custodians will. Some areas were collected by custodial staff and some were not.
- Top generated recyclable items by employees are: paper, cardboard, aluminum cans, plastic bottles and glass bottles.
- Staff were not sure what is recyclable.
- Staff wanted to recycle items together in the same container (commingled)
- Staff wanted to be able to recycle more materials at their desk.

Changes implemented to increase recycling:

As a result of the initial survey, the following changes were made to the two City Hall locations in May:

- **Commingled Recycling:** After City staff worked with Seadrunar, they allowed more items for recycling and permitted items to be commingled. Staff can now commingle recyclable items at desks and in lunchrooms. Recyclable items include: paper, cardboard, aluminum cans, plastic bottles.
- **Glass Recycling added:** Seadrunar was not willing to take glass, but Allied is. To allow glass recycling, containers were set up in lunch rooms for glass bottles and jars.
- **Signage:** Since there is a lot of confusion on what is recyclable, signage was added to all recycling containers listing what can and cannot be recycled.
- **Custodian collection of all recycling.** Custodians now collect all recycling.
- **Increased outside recycling capacity.** As a result of the new program, an additional 4 yards of recyclable material is collected per week.
- **Added public recycling containers:** Large, attractive, metal containers were added to City Hall lobbies for the public to use while visiting City Hall.
- **Education Campaign:** To help increase awareness, the following outreach activities were conducted to boost recycling.
 - Met with Green Team to help “spread the word”
 - Placed stickers on all recycling containers
 - Sent emails to staff
 - Hung posters and signs (appendix b)
 - Presented for a few department staff meetings
 - Trained custodian on new procedures and on what is recyclable.
 - Created paycheck insert on changes

Final Survey and results:

In September, a second survey was sent out to staff to help measure changes and to evaluate staff satisfaction with the improved recycling program. Sixty-nine employees responded. Results are listed in Appendix A.

Results included:

- Items recycled: Two survey question asked staff about items they recycled.
 - Plastic bottle recycling Increased: About 15% more employees answered that they now recycle plastic bottles,
 - Glass recycling: About 28% of respondents now use new glass recycling containers.
 - Less “non- recyclers”: In the first survey 7% said they did not recycle. After the campaign, only 1 person responded that they did not recycle (1.4%)
- Which changes helped employees recycle? One question asked employees to identify the changes that helped them the most. The top 3 responses were:
 1. Commingled recycling helped almost 80% of respondents recycle.
 2. Recycling education on what is and is not recyclable helped about 40% of respondents recycle.
 3. Tied for 3rd place were custodial collection and new glass recycling. About 23% of respondents listed these items as helpful for making recycling easier.
- Responses for “items that make recycling hard for you” were very low.
 - No more than 4 people responded that any of the following items were a problem: still unclear what is recyclable (3%); custodial staff is not emptying recyclables (3%); Need recycling containers in my area (6%), Need signs listing what is recyclable (6%), Having issue with overflow of garbage or recycling (1% for garbage and 4% for recycling)
- Finally, staff were asked if they recycle a greater volume of recyclables since the program was changed. Approximately 36% of staff said they recycle more.
- A lot of positive comments were included. Here are a few:
 - “Commingling is great. That was the only change I thought was necessary. I also think it is great to provide trash and recycling in the main lobby”
 - “Please keep up the good work, this was a much needed program”
 - “Great!”
 - “Great to have this to make it easier for people”

- “It’s working really really well. I really like the single container at the desk. Makes it easy to do the right thing!”
- “I don’t think I recycle more, but it is easier since I don’t have to take items home with me. I can just recycle them at work.”
- “I really appreciate having the signs on the recycle boxes in our cubbies. Makes things easier.”
- “Keep up the great work”
- “The newly placed containers are very convenient and make it much easier to recycle my items. Thank you.”
- “The bins in the foyer as well as the lobby have been helpful.”

Recycling volume: Approximately 4 additional yards of recyclables is now collected per week from the City Hall facilities, as a result of this very successful program.

Appendix A

Pre: 4-29-09 (85 responses); post 9-10-09 (69 responses)

1. In which City building do you work?

	4-29-09	9-10-09
6300 Southcenter Blvd	64.7% (55 responses)	62.3% (43 responses)
City Hall- 6200 Southcenter Blvd	32.9% (28 responses)	34.8% (24 responses)
Other (please specify)	3.5% (3 responses)	2.9% (2 responses)
Total responses	85	69
	"Other" responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Dept 6200 Southcenter Blvd • Off-site facility • Neighborhood Resource Center 	"Other" responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Dept 6200 Southcenter Blvd • Police Dept 6200 Southcenter Blvd

2. Which of the following recycling containers do you use in your building?

	4-29-09	9-10-09
Recycling container at/under my desk	84.5% (71 responses)	82.6% (57 responses)
Blue barrels in central locations	51.2% (43 responses)	49.3% (34 responses)
Recycling container- in kitchen or break room	45.2% (38 responses)	52.2% (36 responses)
Glass recycling buckets in lunch/break rooms	Were added after first survey	27.5% (19 responses)
Other (please specify)	14.3% (12 responses)	11.6% (8 responses)
None of these- I do not recycle	7.1% (6 responses)	1.4% (1 response)
	"Other" responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only have a paper shred box, no recycle container nearby • metals 	"Other" responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Containers by the front doors • Bucket in MC u copy room • I haven't used the central location blue barrel yet, but am

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only paper recycle in front office • Recycling bin at outside enclosure. • Recycling boxes in hallway near conf. room 3 • Police Dept requires all papers to be shredded • aluminum/glass recycling in DCD (which is not my dept.) • Recycling boxes set up for plastic water bottles • recycle dumpster outside • Bring plastic dairy tubs home to recycle. • Recycling containers located in the PD Front Office and PD Evidence Processing area. Also can recycling to raise \$ for the Explorers group. We also recycle boxes and shredded paper through the bin next to the dumpster. In evidence we also recycle mixed metals. • Glass bottles are recycled in the kitchen and employees take them home to recycle. 	<p>glad it is there in the lobby!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only a couple of lousy boxes placed willy-nilly. Not serious. • Recycling dumpster, containers in the lobby. • I use recycling containers in the Sgt's office, the PD front office and I also shred most of my misc paper which, in turn, gets put out in the recycling containers. I also recycle my aluminum cans in a PD receptacle that is a fundraiser for the police explorers. • Recycle cardboard and packaging, picked up by custodial staff. • Paper recycling barrel in closet next to Lisa V.
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3. Which of the following items do you generate and recycle? (check all that apply)

	4-29-09	9-10-09
Paper	100% (84 responses)	97.1% (66 responses)
Cardboard	69% (58 responses)	79.4% (54 responses)
Aluminum Beverage Cans	64.3% (54 responses)	60.3% (41 responses)
Plastic Bottles	54.8% (46 responses)	70.6% (48 responses)
Glass Bottles	25% (21 responses)	26.5% (18 responses)
Plastic dairy tubs	19% (16 responses)	Not accepted in new program
Steel cans	10.7% (9 responses)	10.3% (7 responses)
Other (please specify)	8.3% (7 responses)	7.4% (5 responses)
Milk cartons	7.1% (6 responses)	Not accepted in new program
Glass Jars	6.0% (5 responses)	8.8% (6 responses)

	<p>"other" responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work related materials- various to include haz. Mat • Aluminum foil • Water bottle lids, I recycle through Mary Miotke • Plastic 1 and 2 liter bottles, plastic food containers that aren't dairy • Foam core board • Take out containers • In evidence we dispose of (recycle) numerous types of metal 	<p>"other" responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printer cartridges • Paper • Plastic containers ie yogurt containers • Styrofoam food containers • Styro, sponge or other packaging items received in shipments
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4. What currently prevents you from recycling at work? (only asked on 4-29-09 survey)

Confused about which items are recyclable and which are garbage	13.5%	7
Don't like to walk to central bins to empty my own desk recycling box	11.5%	6
Too busy	11.5%	6
Don't generate many recyclable items	11.5%	6
Don't like to separate materials	5.8%	3
<p>Other (please specify)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • don't currently have a recycle bin anywhere in the police dept. • There should be recycling containers in other spaces • I currently recycle and understand what items need to be recycled. • Nothing prevents me. • Confused about what the City recycles and what can be put in the recycle containers • I always recycle, so this question does not apply. • N/A • I always recycle • Nothing • requirement of destruction as opposed to recycling • Not enough recycle bins for all items • There is no system to remove recycled products from the building. Custodians can take trash but do not have room for recycling. 	59.6%	31

<p>The City never contracted for Waste Management to pick up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not sure where the recycle bins are • nothing prevents me from recycling • Can't recycle plastic containers and need cardboard/paper recycling in kitchen • I do recycle. • Nothing prevents. I'm perfectly happy to recycle. • I do not have any problem with recycling • No available containers • I recycle. • Would like more accessible (aluminum/glass) recycling containers in my work area • Recycling bins not clearly marked in PD Patrol area/Easily accessible. • I don't know where my plastic bottles and cans should go. • No bins for plastics and recycling other than paper • Nothing - I recycle all the time. • We currently have an ad hoc system for recycling glass and cans - someone here takes these materials home with them - it would be nice to expand these efforts to the full range of items that can be recycled. • Already contributes to recycling • no bin for cans/bottles in our area • Don't have bins for cans, plastic or glass in Dept. • I do recycle the paper and such at my desk, but do not care enough to take the time for the others. The commingling idea would work well for me and my type. • I recycle paper, but there I don't see bins for cans, plastic, etc. 		
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4. A few months ago, changes were made to the recycling program to make it easier. Please “check off” any changes that helped you recycle (only asked on 9-10-09 survey)

Recyclables can now be put in one container (paper, bottles, cans) instead of separating them.	79.7%	51
I no longer have to empty my own deskside recycling container. My container is now emptied by custodial staff.	23.4%	15
I have a better understanding of which materials are recyclable and which are not, thanks to emails and stickers on containers.	42.2%	27
New glass bottle and jar recycling containers in break/lunch rooms	23.4%	15
Attended a presentation by City recycling specialist, regarding what is and is not recyclable.	6.3%	4
Other	7.8%	5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual emptying of desk recycling container is helpful. • Our break room recycling does not seem to be picked up. • The containers are here. No one is using them. You have to do better at education!! Otherwise this will fail. • We were already recycling glass and steel containers, but a staff person was taking them home. It is nice to have them picked up here. • Recycling is actually picked up from office. 		
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5 Currently, paper is collected for recycling in your desk recycling container/box, which you empty into blue barrel central containers yourself- when it is full. Bottles and cans are collected in large recycling containers in kitchen areas. We are considering changes to improve this program. Which changes to our City employee recycling program would make recycling easier and more convenient for you? (check all that apply)-- (only asked on 4-29-09 survey)

Recycling paper, bottles and cans in the same container ("Commingled Recycling") instead of having to separate materials (Now paper is collected in desk boxes, bottles/cans collected in kitchens in central containers)	45.5%	35
Better signage showing what can and cannot be recycled	36.4%	28
Being able to recycle glass bottles and jars (currently not recyclable at our buildings)	32.5%	25
More public recycling containers (in lobbies)	31.2%	24
Other (please specify)	31.2%	24
Additional central locations for bottles and cans	23.4%	18
Having the recycling box at my desk emptied by custodial service, rather than bringing it myself to central blue barrels	14.3%	11
Better understanding of what can and cannot be recycled	14.3%	11

Better understanding of locations for central collection containers	14.3%	11
Additional central locations to empty my desk recycling box	5.2%	4
	<i>answered question</i>	77
	<i>skipped question</i>	8

"Other" Responses

- having a recycle bin at or near our office/desks
- I have a good understanding of recycling. I think it is misguided to think or assume that our custodial staff or paying a custodial staff to empty recycling boxes. This is laziness at its height!
- Things are fine as they are.
- Suite #112 custodial staff empty all recycling/garbage
- being able to recycle tin cans
- fine as is
- Ability to have recycling removed from building.
- Blue Barrels? What Blue Barrels?
- Recycling bin in each office
- I'm OK with recycling as it is now
- see above question 5
- SeaDruNar already picks up at our desks once a week.
- Janitorial service already empties at my desk.
- City Hall only has one receptacle for glass/bottles Why?
- Nothing - I'm fine.
- Oftentimes the blue barrels are already full-no more room to put our recycling in. Maybe we need more barrels or more frequent pickups.
- the big blue barrels STINK. they should be cleaned.
- We need an additional blue barrel as the two we have frequently fill up.
- Able to recycle plastic dairy tubs central or at desk.
- The "public" recycling containers in lobbies makes me a little uneasy--I'd be concerned w/frequency of pick-up, cleanliness, lack of space, etc.

- I have a recycling box at my desk?
- My recycling under my desk is emptied by custodial service.
- no recycle containers in Major Crimes Unit
- I think it is fine

5 Please “check mark” items that make recycling hard for you. (only asked on 9-10-09 survey)

Still unclear about what is recyclable	3%	2
Custodial staff is not emptying deskside recycling container- and I would like to have it picked up (note your location the “other” section of this question.	3%	2
Need recycling containers for my area.	6%	4
Need more signs listing what can and cannot be recycled in my area.	6%	4
Having issues with garbage overflowing between pickups	1%	1
Having issues with recycling overflowing between pickups	4%	3
Other (please specify) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like a recycle container (plastic) for our department kitchen area. • 90% of my stuff that I can recycle; I’m not always sure whether the other 10% is recyclable or not; more pictures or description of other-than-normal recyclables would be helpful to me. • None- a very simple and convenient program. • No issue, all is great! • Suite 211, 6300 bldg, in the break room. • Can we recycle plastic tubs and clear plastic glasses • You need to educate the people. I understand it and do it but most don’t. • Laurie’s cubby • Working fine for me! It would be nice to be able recycle plastic bags next. • Whish the other #1 and #2 items could be recycled. • Would like yogurt cups to be recyclable. • The outdoor recycling containers are constantly overflowing and not able to be closed. • Could the packaging (box) for frozen meals be recycled in the lunchroom? 	20%	14

- I would like plastic food containers (yogurt containers) to be allowed in commingled recycling.

6 Would you consider having garbage collected at your desk by custodial staff on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and your recyclables collected on Tuesdays and Thursdays? Currently custodial staff collects garbage every day and does not collect recycling at all. (only asked on 4-29-09 survey)

Yes	52.4%	43
No	24.4%	20
Other (please specify)	37.8%	31
	<i>answered question</i>	82
	<i>skipped question</i>	3

- That would be great!
- I generate too much "garbage"
- I would rather empty my recycle myself and have my trash emptied on a daily basis.
- I don't think the custodial staff should be given this extra task. They are short handed as it is.
- doesn't matter to me I will recycle regardless
- No preference
- Garbage everyday and recyclables on Tues & Thurs.
- N/A
- fine as is
- We "PD" shred all paper in our boxes before recycling
- Our trash is collected twice a week unless the custodian is ill or on vacation; then it could be a couple of weeks.
- Current & schedule & collection is just fine. Leave recycling box under desk at my will to empty. Thank you.
- Garbage needs to be picked up everyday!!! SMELLS!
- my paper recycling is collected daily

- Either way OK with me
- I have garbage and recycling picked up on a regular basis already.
- Sometimes I have to go back & look in my paper recycle bin. I like having the control of emptying it.
- Custodial collects both garbage and recycling daily at 6300.
- Custodial staff does pick up my recycle daily.
- I think that the current method is fine, I find it curious that anyone would not have the time to dump their own recycle box.
- Don't Care!
- I would prefer to do my own recycling.
- Garbage should be every day and people should not be too lazy to take their recycle to the bins or barrels,
- Great idea - my trash can is rarely full and could be skipped although most offices are pretty small so not sure where an extra collection container would go.
- Other facilities are capable of collecting both (trash and recycle) daily. It can be done and it is not time consuming. The cart can have 2 bags - trash and recycle to aid the janitor.
- Or both every day. Garbage gets stinky!
- Prefer is stays the same. Would like garbage collected everyday and would rather empty my recycle myself. I sometimes go back through my recycle looking for something.
- Why should custodial staff collect recycle? They already have enough to do.
- They can reduce my garbage pickup days, but I prefer not to have my recycling picked up as I like to control when I empty my personal recycle box...thanks!
- we take care of our paper –
- The current collection works great

6 Do you recycle more items or a greater volume of recyclables since the program was changed a few months ago? (only asked on 9-10-09 survey)

Yes- I recycle more.	36.4%	24
I recycle the same amount.	59.1%	39
No- I recycle less	1.5%	1
Unsure	3.0%	2
	<i>answered question</i>	82

7 OPTIONAL: Program comments? Suggestions? Questions? Please include your email for a response.

- Keep up the good work and let's continue to work on recycling more of everything.
- Keep up the good work.
- The bins in the foyer as well as the lobby have been helpful. Next time there is a change in the program, please just send ONE email stating the changes. There is no need to give us a blow by blow between you and the facilitators. Whatever is decided just relay the pertinent information, but not all of the background information on how it came out. Because of the sheer volume of emails and hand outs, I find that I am no longer included to read them.
- Thank you for making improvements!
- The newly placed containers are very convenient and make it much easier to recycle my items. Thank you.
- I do it but most don't. You need to educate people so they will see it as important.
- Thanks!
- Keep up the great work!
- I really appreciate having the signs on the recycle boxes in our cubbies- It makes things easier.
- Not to skew your survey results- I don't think I recycle more, but it is easier since I don't have to take items home with me, I can just recycle them at work.
- It's working really really well. I really like the single container at the desk. Makes it easy to do the right thing!
- It is disappointing that the blue, metal recycling containers were soooo expensive especially in these tough economics times. Wish a more cost effective container was purchased.
- It doesn't make sense to separate plastic bottle caps from other plastics. It's all plastic. I don't separate these things at home.
- Great to have this to make it easier for people. Would love to see expansion of more items that could be recycled.
- I would typically take containers home to recycle if I couldn't recycle at work. Although I may be more inclined to not throw recyclables in the garbage if there are more options at work.
- GREAT!
- Would be nice to recycle dairy containers (ie yogurt, cottage cheese) at desk, in kitchen or central locations. For now, I just bring them home. sbrock@ci.tukwila.wa.us
- Nothing changed for me. I still recycle the same way I always have.
- Please keep up the good work... this is a much needed program.
- The commingling is great. That was the only change I thought was necessary. I also think it was great to provide trash and recycling in the main lobby. My main request at this point would be to have it all calm down- no more emails or flyers please!

Appendix B: Poster for outreach

*"Rethink Recycling"
in the 6200 and 6300
Buildings starting
MAY 11, 2009.*

HAPPY TOGETHER!



 **NEW!**
**"All in One"
Recycling!**

- Plastic bottles,
- Metal cans and
- Paper/cardboard

can be recycled together in the same container, at your desk recycling box or in recycling containers located in common spaces

 **NEW!**
GLASS RECYCLING

Glass bottles and jars are recyclable in green buckets in common spaces, labeled "Glass only"

 **NEW!**
RECYCLING PICK UP

Recycling boxes at your desk will now be collected & emptied by custodial staff twice a week!

Questions? Email rfox@ci.tukwila.wa.us

Printed on recycled content paper